She'd go AWOL for three or four days. Then suddenly she'd be back. She started to trick the money people at the hospital. She'd get her whole pin money allowance for the month. Then she'd go back fifteen minutes later, ask a different worker, and get it again. Velvet would sneak up the dark-varnished stairs while Serge was talking to the Anglo girlfriend on his cell. Then Serge would phone the cops.

I offered her a couple of cigarettes. She came downstairs and we stood and talked for a while on adjacent porches.

She'd been a hairdresser in the 70's. It was a better world. There were more drugs in it. She and her boyfriend took them in their basement apartment, listening to rock. Her friend shot someone after an argument and wound up in an asylum for the criminally insane. Velvet was cruising down the highway on the back of someone's Harley and it was as if one of her thoughts leapt out of her head into the road in front of them and pulled them through the windshield. I imagined her frozen in the headlights of an on-rushing thought. She was mental road kill.

First it was Barrie and Adam, then it was Velvet and me. The camera didn't work, or it would have filmed the same scene over and over again.

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